

with a B.A. in education. She received her M.A. degree in public administration from California Lutheran University. Before her election to the Board of Supervisors, she was a teacher and an administrator with the Pleasant Valley School District.

First elected to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in November 1980, Supervisor Kildee was one of the first two women elected to the Board and in 1982 served as its first woman chairperson.

Supervisor Maggie Kildee's leadership contributed to a number of important developments within Ventura County. Her various programs included the County's Greenbelt Agreements between cities, the first-in-the-state Agricultural Lands Preservation Program, the Ventura County Council on Economic Vitality, and the "Beyond the Year 2000 Committee". She also served as the chair for numerous committees such as the Ventura County Medical Center Oversight Committee, the Ventura County Jail Ad-Hoc Committee, and the Ventura County Waste Commission.

As the end of her term draws near, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to Maggie Kildee for her dedication to both the County of Ventura, CA, and the Board of Supervisors.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE RHODE, JR.

HON. JOE SKEEN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to note the passing of and to pay tribute to Michael Rhode, Jr., of South Carolina.

Mike Rhode died earlier this year, in May, after a brave bout with cancer, only too briefly after he retired from his position as Secretary of the Panama Canal Commission. His wife, Lin, worked in my congressional office from 1981 until her retirement in 1995.

Mike Rhode was a close and valuable friend and a talented and dedicated public servant. He and Lin planned for an early retirement to spend more time with his daughter, Pamela Lister, and two sons, Michael and Randy.

Mike Rhode served as chief of the U.S. Army's Senate Legislative Liaison Office in the 1970's. His combat experience in Korea and Vietnam was of major help to the Members of Congress he worked with on his travels to Southeast Asia. Mike was extremely knowledgeable on issues affecting our country's membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO].

After 26 years of distinguished and dedicated service to our country in the Army, Mike retired to take the position of Secretary of the Panama Canal Commission in 1980. Mike was extraordinarily helpful to me and several Members of Congress in his position with the Panama Canal Commission. He was successful in explaining and analyzing proposed legislation and to suggest ways in which the laws governing the operation and maintenance of the Panama Canal could be modified over the years to ease the transition to Panamanian control by the year 2000.

Mike Rhode will be remembered by his family and friends for living a distinguished life on behalf of his family and our country. My thoughts and prayers remain with his family

and friends on his passing. He will be sorely missed by us all.

INTRODUCTION OF THE REHABILITATION AND RETURN TO WORK OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1996

HON. JIM BUNNING

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, today, in behalf of myself, ANDY JACOBS, CLAY SHAW, and other members of the Ways and Means Committee on both sides of the aisle, I am introducing the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Opportunity Act of 1996. This legislation will help Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability recipients who want to work return to a life of financial independence and self-sufficiency.

We are all too familiar with the huge increases in the Social Security disability insurance and Supplemental Security Income disability rolls over the last decade. From 1986 to 1995 alone, the rolls grew almost 70 percent, to 7.5 million recipients. Unfortunately, there is no end to this alarming trend in sight. In fact, new disability awardees are, on average, becoming younger and younger. This means they will spend more of their lives dependent on Social Security or SSI unless Congress gives them the opportunity to obtain the tools and training they need to return to productive and self-sufficient lives.

The General Accounting Office recently reported that the Social Security Administration has placed little priority on helping disabled recipients return to productive employment. GAO found that SSA's rehabilitation programs don't focus on providing the support and assistance that many people with disabilities need to transition from the disability rolls back to work. In my view, SSA's record on rehabilitation is appalling.

Of the 6.6 million working-age people who were receiving Social Security or SSI benefits in 1995, only 4 percent were even referred for rehabilitation. Of these, only 6,238, or less than one-tenth of 1 percent, were successfully rehabilitated. This isn't fair to disabled recipients, who will otherwise face a life of dependency and denied opportunity. It is time we let Social Security and SSI recipients who are disabled know we care enough to invest in their future.

The Social Security Act requires that individuals applying for disability benefits be referred to State vocational rehabilitation agencies for services, but State agencies are reluctant to take on the more difficult cases. GAO estimates that if only an additional 1 percent of the 6.6 million working-age people receiving Social Security or SSI disability benefits were to leave the rolls by returning to work, an estimated \$3 billion could be saved in subsequent years.

Under my legislation, Social Security and SSI disability recipients would no longer be limited to using State vocational rehabilitation agencies for services, but would be able to choose whether to receive rehabilitation services from private, nonprofit, or State rehabilitation providers. Disabled recipients would, for the first time, have a broad choice of certified providers from whom they could receive the

rehabilitation services they need. It would be up to the individual with the disability to decide which rehabilitation provider best met his or her needs. The competition that would result would guarantee that persons with disabilities would be choosing from the highest quality services.

In addition, my bill would extend Medicare coverage for 5 years for disabled recipients who work, and Medicare would continue to be the primary insurer for employers with fewer than 100 employees. And employers who hire Social Security or SSI disability recipients would be eligible for a 1-year tax credit for the employer share of FICA taxes.

The legislation creates a commission of rehabilitation experts to oversee the implementation of a new out-come-based rehabilitation program designed to help recipients move from dependency to self-sufficiency. The program would create a competitive system utilizing networks of service providers; a straightforward incremental fee structure for providers that caps overall costs at certain milestones of service; criteria for SSA to contract out the administration of the new system; and a voucher-type system to maximize consumer choice and limit costs.

To ensure that disabled recipients receive the best quality services, the bill calls for standards, including review by consumer organizations, that rehabilitation providers must meet in order to serve Social Security or SSI disability recipients.

These are all features that persons with disabilities, rehabilitation providers, and small businesses agree are necessary for a successful return-to-work effort. I look forward to hearing comments from all of these constituencies so that in the next Congress we can take legislative action to provide real opportunity to persons with severe disabilities, enabling them to return to productive employment and self-sufficiency. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join with me in this effort by supporting this legislation.

DYSTONIA AWARENESS WEEK

HON. ANDREA H. SEASTRAND

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, thousands of people recognize the week of September 28 to October 5 as Dystonia Awareness Week. I have learned and urge other citizens to learn about this alarming neurological disorder that affects as many as 250,000 people in North America.

Dystonia is a neurological disorder which creates muscle spasms to all parts of the body. The muscle spasms are very painful and sometimes disabling. Unfortunately the cause of Dystonia is unknown and there is no cure. The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation has been formed to help those who suffer from Dystonia, along with their families and friends in finding the cause and cure of this neurological disorder. As we help those who suffer from Dystonia I hope and pray that a cure will be found to put an end to this disabling pain.